REMARKS

In the Office Action, Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gengler et al. in view of Gosselink et al. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection in view of the following.

Gengler discloses a cracking furnace with a special preheating system. The heat-exchanger means in the convection zone is subdivided into a plurality of functionally separated heat-exchanger bundles and the feedstock is passed selectively through the bundles in accordance with the composition of the feedstock. See Abstract. In one configuration, the furnace can be used to process naphtha. However, a different configuration is used to process other types of feedstocks. For example, in column 2, lines 59-65, Gengler teaches that it is possible with changing feedstocks to switch over the sections of the heat exchanger means in bundle-wise manner and thereby vary the effective heat exchange surface to compensate for the through-puts and physical characteristics, for example, the boiling points or specific heats of changing feedstocks.

If the configuration in Gengler were changed from the naphtha design to process a different feedstock, the design would no longer be a naphtha designed steam cracking furnace. Further, the ability to change the configuration of the heat exchange surface would increase the complexity and cost of the furnace.

The present invention, on the other hand, utilizes a conventional naphtha designed steam cracking furnace to process heavy hydrocarbons with a boiling point between 150 °C and 400 °C obtained by Fischer-Tropsch synthesis without changing the configuration of the unit. These Fischer-Tropsch hydrocarbons have a higher boiling point than naphtha and it would not be expected that they could be processed in a naphtha furnace without excessive coke formation.

The Gosselink reference discloses a process for preparing lower olefins from a hydrocarbon feed wherein the hydrocarbon feed is partly made up of a hydroprocessed synthetic oil fraction such as Fischer-Tropsch products. However, it does not disclose nor suggest the use of a conventional naphtha designed steam cracking furnace to process heavy hydrocarbons with a boiling point between 150 °C and 400 °C obtained by Fischer-Tropsch synthesis.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Gengler and Gosselink does not teach nor suggest the present invention.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe the instant application to be in condition for allowance and respectfully request that such action be taken. Should the Examiner find any impediment to the prompt allowance of the claims that could be corrected by a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to initiate such an interview with the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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